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THE REFINEMENT OF THE LINE

BY ALFRED TRUMBLE

Illustrated from original drawings by A. de Riquer.

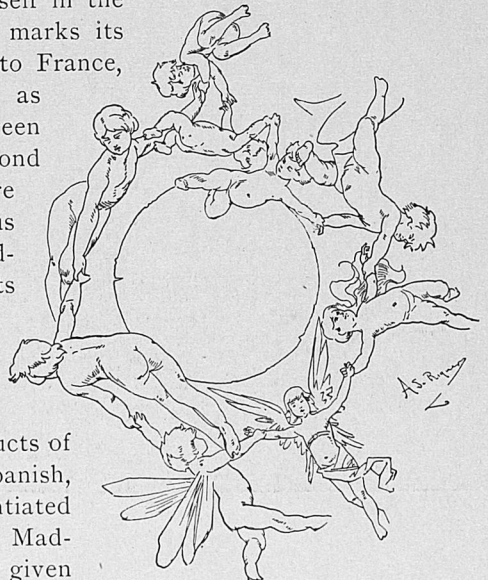


ELFIN MUSIC

ONE feature of the modern development of Spanish art has been the creation of a class of native illustrators who occupy a place which is distinctively their own. In style, spirit, and grasp of the picturesque, these artists have established a claim to attention which the world has not been slow to recognize. The Spanish school of graphic art has become as definite in its character as that of France itself.

The extraordinary genius of Vierge has fixed a standard of originality and vital fire, than which none higher exists in the whole range of graphic illustration. He has done for Spanish art in black and white, what Fortuny in his day did for Spanish art in color, and his deserved success has encouraged the efforts of others, who, if they do not rival him in strength, at least are worthy workers in the same rich field. One of the most notable of these is A. de Riquer.

De Riquer belongs to the vigorous and progressive school which, during the past twenty years, has raised Barcelona to a place second only to Madrid in its importance as a Spanish art centre. The same energetic spirit which has placed Catalonia in the van of industrial and commercial progress in Spain, has inspired the artistic movement of the province, and reflects itself in the productions with which that movement marks its advance. The contiguity of Barcelona to France, and the active intercourse, intellectual as well as commercial, which subsists between this section of Spain and the Republic beyond the Pyrenees, has grafted a certain measure of Gallic feeling upon the more vivacious and joyously brilliant methods of the Madrid school; so that the Barcelonese artists find a manner of expression which is intermediate between the pronounced native style of the middle and south, and the style which prevails in France. It would be impossible to mistake the products of the Barcelona school for anything but Spanish, yet these products are distinctly differentiated from those which characterize the art of Madrid, and those which have more recently given a measure of importance to the intrepid and



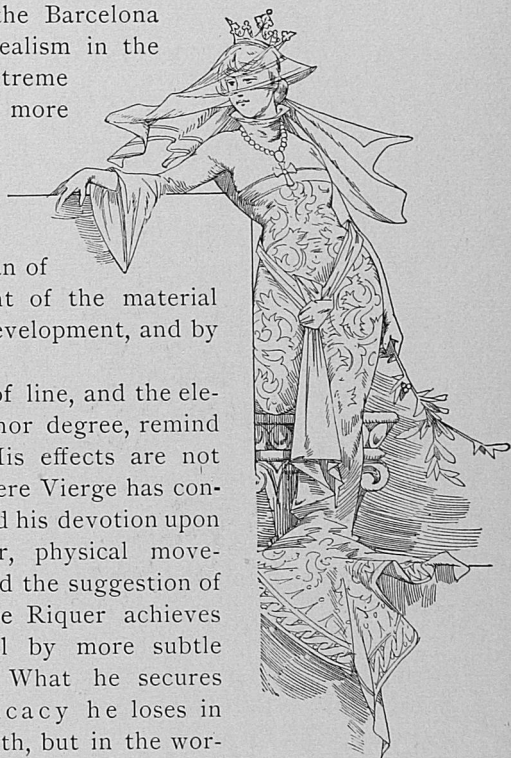
A MERRY ROUND

showy art of Andalusia. The painters of the Barcelona school exhibit a marked tendency toward realism in the transcription of nature, though without the extreme forms of expression which characterize the more advanced school in France. In the art of design, as applied to the service of the press, the same quality reveals itself. As a consequence, the essentially decorative feeling and style of De Riquer mark him out as a man of advanced originality, altogether independent of the material influences to which he owes his technical development, and by which he is surrounded.

There is something in his fluent grace of line, and the elegance of his touch, which, of course in a minor degree, remind one of the unique art of Paul Baudry. His effects are not effects of contrasts, but of harmonies. Where Vierge has concentrated his devotion upon

character, physical movement, and the suggestion of color, De Riquer achieves his ideal by more subtle means. What he secures in delicacy he loses in strength, but in the worship of beauty, for its own sake, he attains his end, and in this he is unrivalled among Spanish illustrators. To set such a man the task of illustrating "Gil Blas," or "Pablo de Segovia," would be as preposterous as it would be unreasonable to require from a butterfly the soaring flight of a skylark. But within the limitations of his sensitive and gracious talent, in his place as a master of the purely decorative side of the art of design, he is thoroughly at home.

There is none of the resonance of a trumpet blast in the designs of De Riquer. Their melody is the soft cadence of a lute. They do not strike the eye, but insidiously seduce it. Their charms are sweet and tender, with the sweetness and tenderness of flowers. To accomplish much by such frank and simple means, requires the gift of drawing music from a single string.



BEAUTY'S QUEEN



THE HUNTSMAN